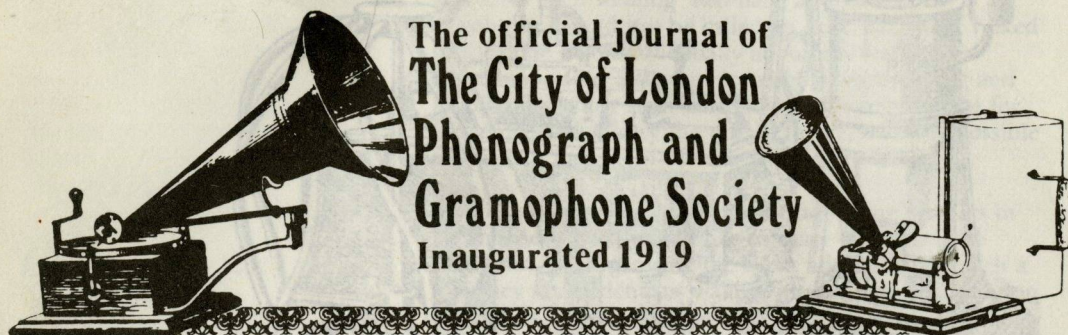
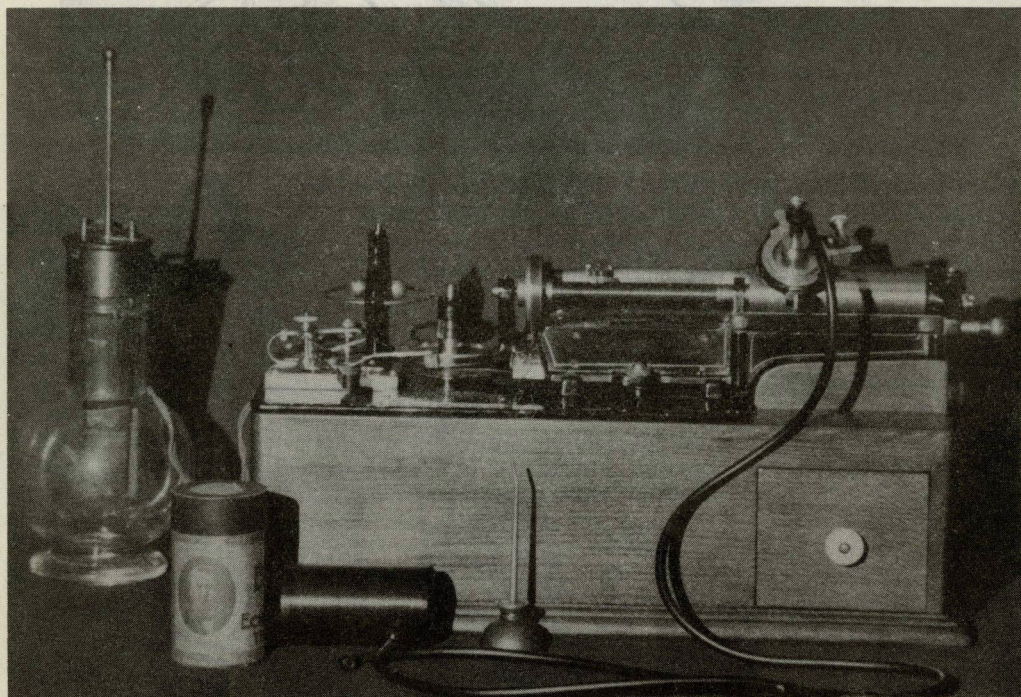


# The Hillandale News



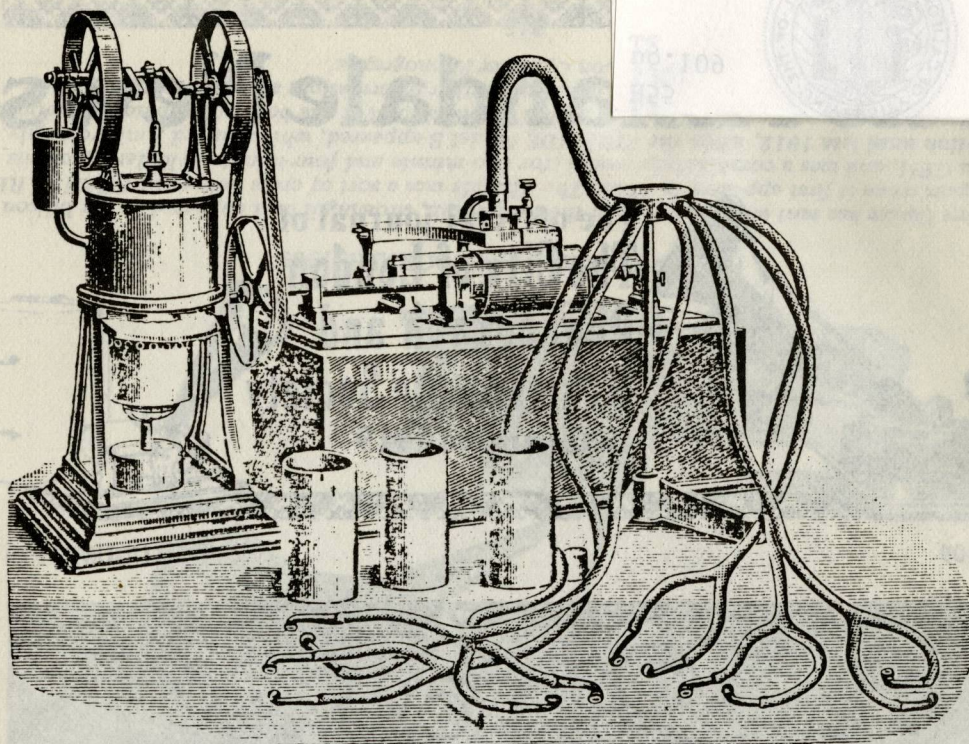
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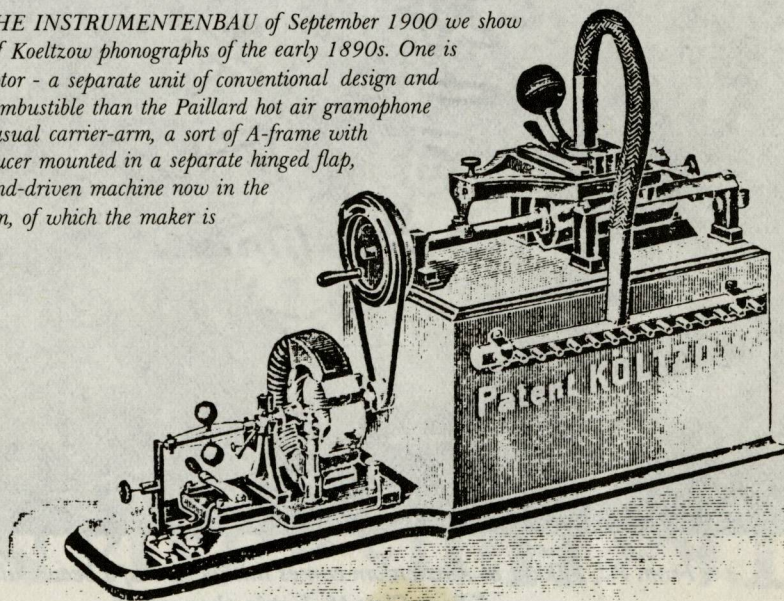


*From P.J. Slikker in Amsterdam comes this picture of a beautifully restored Edison Class M electric phonograph*





From DER DEUTSCHE INSTRUMENTENBAU of September 1900 we show two different models of Koeltzow phonographs of the early 1890s. One is driven by a hot air motor - a separate unit of conventional design and perhaps slightly less combustible than the Paillard hot air gramophone of later years. The unusual carrier-arm, a sort of A-frame with an Edison-type reproducer mounted in a separate hinged flap, is familiar from a hand-driven machine now in the Royal Scottish Museum, of which the maker is unidentified.





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# From the Editor...

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BY FRANK ANDREWS

Since I took over as Editor of Hillandale, I have been wearing two hats, and have been wondering whether the Chairman's Chat column should not be called an Editorial. What I liked about the old title was that it allowed me to waffle inconsequentially about nothing in particular, whereas an Editorial has overtones of serious intent, of something worth saying and worth reading in deadly earnest. I do not often have any such thing to say. However, more for the sake of variety than anything else, I have decided to vary the title in future, and it is possible though by no means certain, that this will give an indication of what is to follow in the column.

The Golden Jubilee dinner was an immense success; it is hoped to include some pictures in this issue, and a full report will appear as an insert, but I would like to place on record the Society's thanks to the Secretary, John McKeown, for organising the event and making it such a memorable occasion. That we 'ran late', as they say in dentists' waiting rooms, was an indication of the fact that everyone was enjoying themselves, although it was a pity that, as a result, Dame Eva Turner had to leave before we could hear her speak. However, we had heard Don Ross reminiscing about music hall stars, Arthur Ord-Hume drawing on his seemingly limitless fund of funny stories, Cavan O'Connor recalling briefly but wittily the problems of singing under sundry pseudonyms and W.A. Chislett remembering the early days of *The Gramophone*.

The latter was just up my street, for the development of high quality acoustic gramophones in the late 1920s in this country owed much to Percy Wilson and his colleagues of The Gramophone's Expert Committee. Percy Wilson it was who designed the papier-mache horn, adopted and subsequently developed for the later E.M.G. and Expert gramophones. They also realised the importance of correct needle track alignment. This was achieved in the Balmain gramophone with its straight-line tracking, but conventional tone-arm machines by leading British manufacturers were soon modified to give the best possible tracking within the limitations of a pivoted arm.

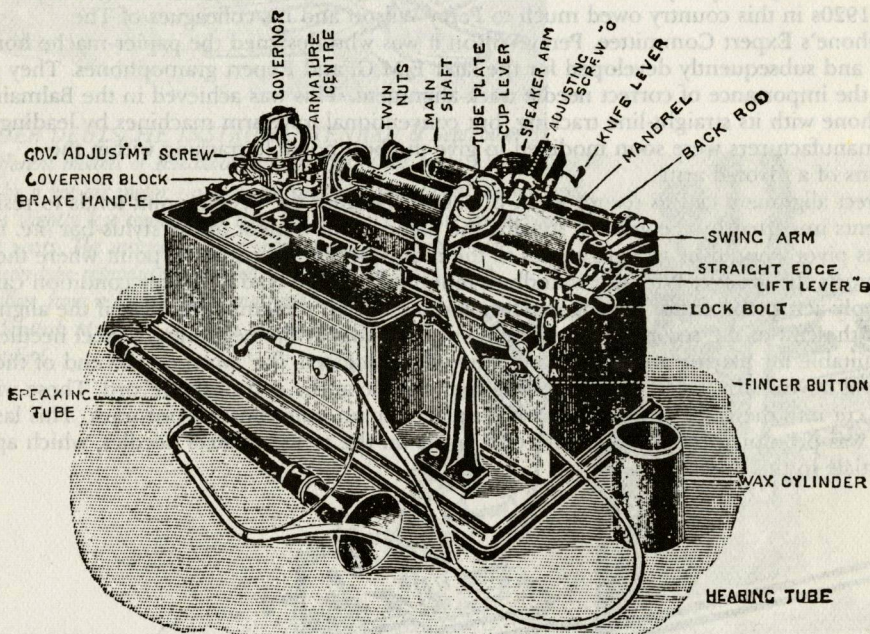
Incorrect alignment causes record wear, of course, because the needle point tends to resist the movements imparted by the groove. Ideally, the plane of movement of the stylus-bar (i.e. the axis of its pivot) should be at right angles to the radius of the record at the point where the needle meets the groove. With the soundbox mounted on a pivoted arm, this condition can never apply across the entire playing surface; and it is worth remembering that, if the alignment angle at the end of the record is widely different from that at the beginning, a steel needle will not be suitable for playing another record, since the elongated 'flar' worn on the end of the needle will have sharp 'sides' corresponding to the angle at the end of the record. These will tend to cut into the sides of the groove when placed in an outermost record-track. This last thought was prompted by Jim Goodall's comments on the re-use of steel needles, which appear in his article in this issue.



## Vice Chairman's Chat

These notes are being written on the morning after the night before. I have a most pleasant hangover from the Chilterns branch meeting which was held at my home. The lounge which was designed to house four people comfortably was invaded by sixteen members and various items of phonography. It was a tight squeeze but I think we all enjoyed the proceedings.

To make space for yesterday's affair and to get all my paperwork tidied I have shelved my attic. While moving all the back issues of Hillandale News up there I have stopped every now and then and had a quick glance at the occasional article. It is amazing the amount of information that is hidden between those pages and I have not noticed. I found out in one issue how to fit a Diamond B carrier arm to different Edison Phonographs, in another how the BM Reproducer works, yet another told me about various early HMV Portables, another on the matrix numbers.....I could go on and on. I strongly recommend you to avail yourself of a few of these volumes. The writings are those of experts who wish to be known as ordinary people, but are willing to share their knowledge with other members and collectors. Send £5.00 to Barry and get a volume this month, another next month etc. I must get back to finish the tidying and eat the spare plate of sandwiches, oh.. and feed the new arrival on the shelf. He is looking anxiously down the horn to see where his sandwiches are. I am considering naming him Nipper, but something tells me that name has been used before.



*Original Edison Class M Phonograph*



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# My First Venture Into The Public Salesroom

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BY FRANK ANDREWS.

I have something of a puritanical streak in my make-up and, when it comes to the hobby of collecting records, or anything else for that matter, I hold the view that paying large sums of money to purchase desired items for one's collection is not true collecting in the narrow sense of the word. It is participating in a market situation which has developed upon the activities of those who originally become interested in collecting and who acquired their wants by the cheapest means possible. Holding this view, I have never participated in auctions nor gone for high-priced items in the various dealers lists, well, that is to say, not until a few weeks ago, when I put in a bid at Christies.

Why did I do this. Here is the background to my first involvement in bidding at an auction, which proved to be a successful bid.

As most members know, our Honorary Chairman, Christopher Proudfoot is employed at Christie's South Kensington saleroom and often conducts sales there. Knowing of my interest in the history of disc records and the companies which made and sold them, Christopher telephoned me one evening about a lot which had been catalogued and which was coming up for sale. There was something about this lot, Christopher felt, which was something different from the usual collection of records, and he took particular note of the characteristics of the discs and even went so far as to photocopy one of the labels and the surrounding area, which he mailed off to me. When he rang me I had not yet received the photocopy.

The make of the record was not unusual, for there, arching around the top of the labels was the word 'GRAMMAVOX' but there was no word 'RECORD', and any of you who possess any Grammavox Records will know that the label's style is usually printed in gold as 'GRAMMAVOX RECORD', with the proprietor's name, The Sound Recording Company Limited, elsewhere on the label.

Another outstanding difference of this lot of five 'GRAMMAVOX' discs was that the label was not of the usual blue, with gold printing, but was a buff coloured paper and the name style had the appearance of having been applied with a rubber stamp. This is also how the remainder of the information on the labels had been applied.

The name of the Sound Recording Company Limited does not appear. The discs were 'single-sided', which in itself, was not remarkable unless one already knew that Grammavox Records as sold to the public appeared only in 'double-sided' form. There was no indication that one was looking at 'test-pressings'. And so our Chairman telephoned me asking if I could tell him anything about them.

My suspicions had been aroused as to what they might be, by the fact of them being single sided, so I asked him who the artists were as their names could support my suspicions. There were no artists' names on the labels! Paradoxically, this lack of names only went to confirm what I thought these records might be.

What were the titles?

They all had the same title which was 'Il Trovatore'.

'Is that all' I asked, aren't there any titles of arias or duets, or choruses perhaps?

'Nothing else' came Christopher's answer, 'but there is a large number on each of the labels and they are the numbers one, two, four, six and seven'.

'Are there any catalogue or matrix numbers on the labels?'

'There is nothing else on the labels whatsoever, but there are matrix numbers in the shellac surrounding the label'.

I asked Christopher for an example, and once he had given me a number I knew exactly with what I was dealing.



Having been reassured that the catalogue had been made up for the sale which was to include this lot of five discs, I asked how I could make a bid for them, being such a novice in these matters, for I could not attend the sale personally. I was willing to go to £20 for the lot. I told Christopher that the five records were part of a set of eight, and he informed me that there were some marks on the outer edge of the discs.

My bid was successful and I acquired the five discs for £10, which was some consolation, for I was beginning to think I had taken leave of my senses in being prepared to stake out £4 each for five records when 20 or 30p had been my limit till then!

What were these records?

It was the merest chance that I knew of them and this is how I came by my knowledge.

A few years ago I had a letter from a Mr Richard Brown of Bury, Lancashire, a researcher into the invention of moving films and the application of sound to the same. Mr Brown had written to Mr Chew of the Science Museum, London, requesting information about the early Edison Kinetoscopes and Kinetophones, and the companies and persons who were connected with these inventions in Britain, and Mr Chew had directed Mr Brown to me.

Correspondence over the years between Brown and myself has been helpful to both our particular lines of research, and Mr Brown in one letter asked me what I knew of the Sound Recording Company Limited, as it appears they had undertaken recordings of operas to accompany motion picture films made by a London-based company.

I knew of the Sound Recording Company Limited and its Grammavox Records, of course, and I did have a snippet of information that the company had been involved with a film company. Well, Brown knew more about this than I did and this is the gist of the information.

In the early summer of 1910, the Animatophone Syndicate was a new company which had joined the businesses then extant who were attempting to produce successful singing motion pictures. This business, like the Sound Recording Company Limited, was established in the Piccadilly area of London.

The Animatophone itself was a machine devised to play gramophone records in synchronisation with a motion picture, and the accuracy of the synchronisation depended upon the film projectionist watching a small pointer on this mechanical device and regulating the speed of turning accordingly. 'And that is so simple that even a child could do it', so said 'Nimrod' in 'The Bioscope' in June 1910.

'Faust' was the first subject chosen by the Animatophone Syndicate and the result was said to have been excellent. 'What a draw 'The Gondoliers' would be'.

By the second week in July 1910 Animatophone filmed operas, with sound, were said to be 'booming' all over the country. Takings at 'Electric Theatres' were said to be doubled. 'Laughing' pictures were also made in sound.

By the end of July 'Il Trovatore' was out and it was said to be a 50 per cent finer production than 'Faust'. Both films were accompanied by the score sung in English translations, but a director of the Animatophone Syndicate said he had to buy a Parson's Auxetophone costing £100, as the records were so weak, and he did not dare give a public show without it.

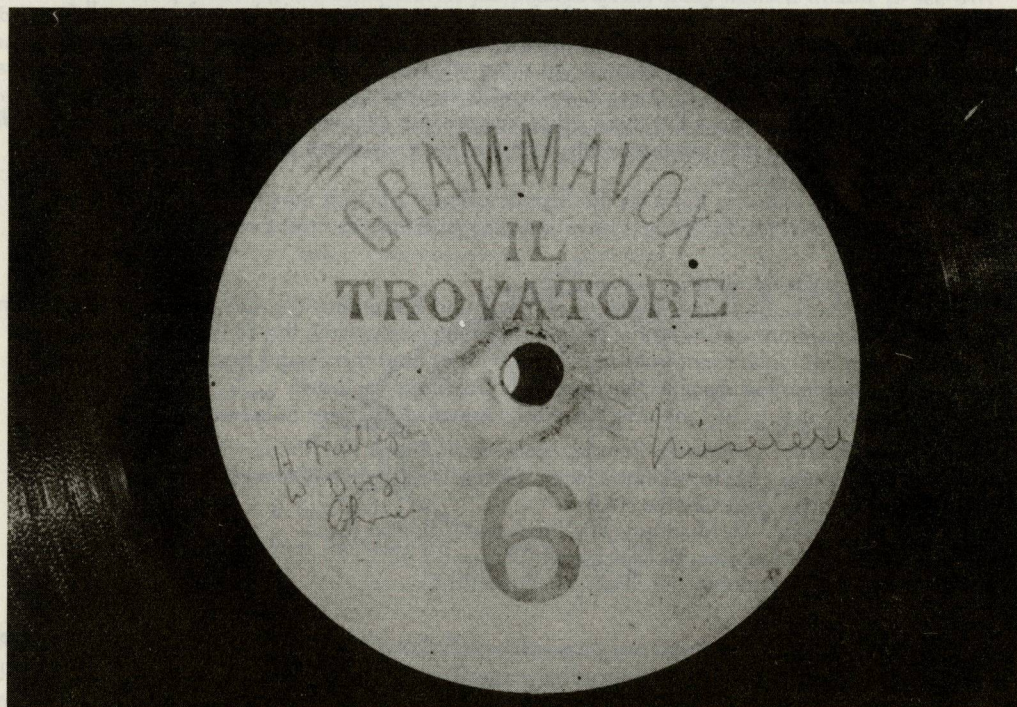
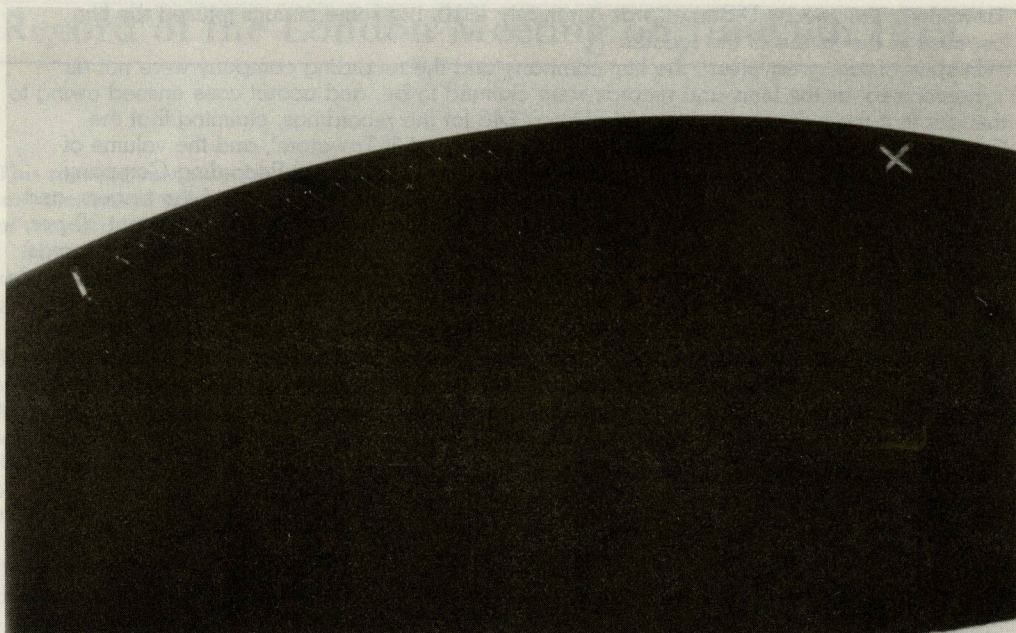
By the end of September 1910 'Il Trovatore' had been booked into 160 'exclusive' districts.

The New Picture Theatre, Kingston, had been opened with an Animatophone film with sound called 'Glimpse of the Ballet', which was encored but was not shown again as it was considered too long. But the popular song 'Sea, Sea, Sea', which had been one of the 'Top of the Pops' for those days, was rendered in 'perfect synchronisation' and was encored, being rewound within 45 seconds, which demonstrated the simplicity of using the Animatophone.

By October 1910 the Animatophone Syndicate were promising a new device to come called The Biophone, and another machine being used for sound with films coming from the British Pallas Manufacturing Company Limited of Goldhawk Road, Shepherds Bush (also known for its Radiophone gramophone).

The Animatophone Syndicate were producing two subjects weekly by the end of 1910 'Il







'Trovatore', directed by D.Barnett, was out in July 1910, but some circuits refused the film because of the failure of the records.

In spite of the 'good press', the film company and the recording company were not as 'synchronised' as the films and records were claimed to be, and a court case ensued owing to the fact that the film company would not pay £46 for the recordings, claiming that the Grammavox records did not synchronise with the film of 'Il Trovatore', and the volume of sound from the discs was not as had been guaranteed. The Sound Recording Company had supplied the orchestra, but the Animatophone Syndicate had supplied the singers, and the Manager of the Sound Recording Company Limited in defence, claimed that not 10 per cent of those singing before the public could make good records. The films and the records were not made at the same time and those acting in the films were not the singers who made the recordings. The film company counter-claimed for £500 damages.

A Mr Hudson was the 'Musical Director' for the Animatophone Syndicate when the operatic recordings were made. It is possible that this was Eli Hudson, the flautist and piccolo player and teacher, who at about that time was also the conductor of the Earl of Lonsdale's Private Military Band, a band which was recorded by the Sound Recording Company and appears in the reprinted catalogue sold by our Society.

As for my 'Il Trovatore' discs, five from a set of eight; the whole eight sides were later issued by the Sound Recording Company to the public, as double-sided discs, with the regular dark blue and gold labels, and one is to be found listed in our reprinted catalogue under the 'G' prefixed catalogue numbers, G5.

How many sets of these records were made in the single-sided form for use in the projection rooms remains unknown. The large numbers on the label were obviously placed thereon to prevent the more dim-witted of projectionists from putting the discs on out of sequence to the film.

The outer edge markings of the discs consist of a small X filled with white colouring, and this marks the beginning of the 'run-in', which angles into the recorded spiral over a distance of three inches. An inch and one quarter away from this white-filled X is a series of fifteen embossed crosses of the same size near the outer edge of the disc and outside of the run-in groove. All these crosses are in contact, each with its neighbour; at the end of this row is a straight impressed line across the outer edge towards the grooves, and this is also filled in with white colouring. The matrix numbers appear twice, once as hand inscribed and once as embossed type-set numbers.

At £2 each, and knowing them for the historic documents that they are, I reckon I have not paid too high a price for the discs. I have not played them yet - but then I did not buy them for that purpose!

Does anyone have the film?

Incidentally, the judge found in favour of the Sound Recording Co. Ltd., but then, within ten months, after a continuous attempt to become a public company, the Animatophone Syndicate went into voluntary liquidation, and by that time the Sound Recording Company were selling Grammavox discs to the public, 'Il Trovatore' included.

My five records are, (and I include the public issues' catalogue numbers):-

- No.1 Fernando's Aria - Lempriere Pringle, bass, and Chorus (G.3)
- No.4 Convent Scene - Hilda Mulligan, sop., Grace Ivell, cont., Wilfred Virgo, ten., J. Barton, bari., L. Pringle, bass, and Chorus (G.4)
- No.2 'Hate and Rage' - H. Mulligan, W. Virgo and J. Barton (G.3)
- No.6 Il Miserer - H. Mulligan, W. Virgo and Chorus (G.5)
- No.7 Home to our Mountains - G. Ivell, W. Virgo (G.6)

The missing records are:-

- No.3 'Gipsy Scene' - G. Ivell, W. Virgo and Chorus (G.4)
- No.5 'In the Camp' - G. Ivell, J. Barton, L. Pringle and Chorus (G.5)
- No.8 'Execution Scene' - H. Mulligan, G.Ivell, W. Virgo and J. Barton (G.6)



# Record of the London Meeting on June 6th 1979.

This meeting saw a double bill; for the first half, Barry Raynaud gave us a talk on horn design, and the second was taken up, indeed extended, by Timothy Massey recalling twenty-five years of record collecting.

Barry's talk on horns raised some interesting points, even if it did at times have the mathematically-uneducated members of the audience gasping for breath, and a summary is given here.

Three basic forms of horn were explained; the parabolic, the exponential and the conical. The first (fig.1) was used by Scott for his Phonautograph in the 1850s. In this shape, it can be shown that beams parallel to the axis focus at one point on the axis, where the latter crosses the *latus rectum*. This means that the parabolic horn is ideal for collecting sounds, which is all Scott wanted to do, but not for reproducing them.

The exponential horn, still in use today (on high-power public address systems, for example), was used, sometimes in folded forms, in the more advanced gramophones of the late 1920s. The basic curve is also one that occurs in nature - that of a self-generating organism - growing in direct proportion to time. This curve has a rate of change of tangent angle with axis at any point on the curve in direct proportion to its length from given origin. The exponential horn does not amplify, but is effectively an acoustic transformer.

The conical horn is a compromise between the parabolic and exponential, suitable both for recording and reproducing. (Here, however, the present writer finds himself unable to see why Edison supplied conical horns specifically for recording and flared horns for reproducing - unless a parabolic recording horn would have been too expensive to make. I do not recall ever seeing a parabolic horn used for recording in any pictures of acoustic recording studios. It seems that, for making records that, unlike Scott's, were to be reproduced, the conical horn was found to be best. Can anyone explain why to a mathematical dunce like me?)

The four diagrams with which Barry illustrated his talk will explain his points better than I can; the captions are his.

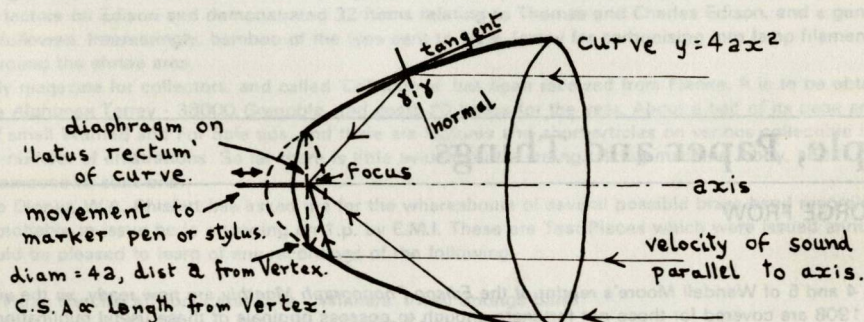


FIGURE 1. The parabolic horn of Scott's Phonautograph was used as the most effective VELOCITY recording ("reading") device. The rate of growth of the curve is  $\frac{dy}{dx} = 8ax$ , i.e. the further along the axis, the angle between the tangent and axis becomes less.



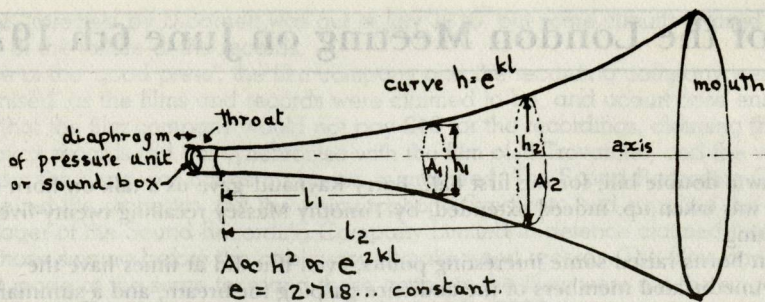


FIGURE 2. The Exponential ("logarithmic") Horn efficiently couples the PRESSURE at the throat to the atmosphere at the mouth, the size of which determines the lowest transmittable (cut-off) frequency. The rate of change of the flare is  $\frac{dy}{dx} = e^{kl}$  which equals the original function, and this device can be regarded as an "Acoustic Transformer"

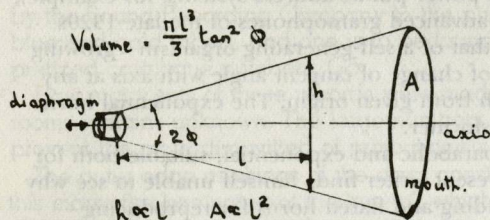


FIGURE 3. The conical horn of Edison and others. It has a straight cross-section whose side is at a constant angle  $\phi$  with axis. It is a compromise between Parabolic and Exponential curves and is roughly equally efficient for Recording and Reproducing

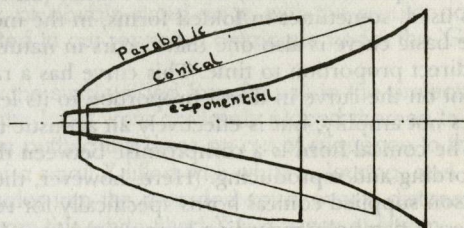


FIGURE 4. Super imposition of the three horn shapes, roughly of same volume for similar mouth/length ratio. The parabolic is ideal as a velocity instrument; the exponential as pressure device; the conical is suitable as a dual-function device.

## People, Paper and Things

BY GEORGE FROW

Volumes 4 and 5 of Wendell Moore's reprint of the *Edison Phonograph Monthly* are now ready, so the years 1903 to 1908 are covered for those not fortunate enough to possess originals of these useful publications. These are mentioned here because there are one or two other recommended reprints also available from him at

■ Sedona, Arizona 86336, as follows:-

Edison Disc Motor, mechanical servicing and repairs	1 dollar
Victor Chart of Mainsprings, Winding Keys and Winding Shafts	50 cents
(or 1 dollar for the two if you already subscribe to the E.P.M. series)	



There is also a reprint photograph offered of Edison in his library (11 inches by 14 inches) from Wendell Moore, price \$2.95, post paid United States, and if there is anyone who does not know of these items, he is recommended to follow them up.

A member whose Gramophone AA lacks a carrier arm is appealing for another more fortunate individual to loan him one, and suggests that while he is making (or having made) one copy, several could be fashioned for those whose machines lack this part. Graphophones are always weak in the carrier arm castings, as owners will testify! All enquiries please to D.P. Whistler, [REDACTED] Finchampstead, Berks., England. (Phone [REDACTED])

Radio history enthusiasts among the membership will be glad to hear of a book that is now available from The Public Relations Dept., Pye Ltd., [REDACTED] Cambridge, England. This is called 'The Story of Pye Wireless', and has been written by member Gordon Bussey. I would add that there is absolutely no charge for it, but at the time of writing my copy has not yet come to hand for a more detailed comment.

At our Diamond Jubilee Dinner, in conversation with Don Ross, the music hall impresario, he asked if we could locate some recordings for him, and he would particularly like to get hold of records or tapes of material by Vera Wootton, Daisy Dormer, Hilda Glyder and Marie Loftus. While one realises that these artistes don't turn up in every roadside record heap, it might be that members could help, and are asked to contact him at [REDACTED] Hove, BN3 2FA ('Phone [REDACTED]).

Re-issues of early and downright ancient records are commonplace nowadays, but one subject where they are notably lacking is light music of the great pre-war orchestras which flourished particularly in the late twenties and early thirties, if they are to be judged by the wonderful records they made. A personal weakness for these is admitted, and also a tidy collection of this sort of music which many people view down their noses, and if musak has to follow us to the corridors of an after-life, then let it be by Marek Weber or the Orchestra Mascotte (Wiener-Boheme Orchestra). This leads up to a mention of a recent issue called Marek Weber and his Famous Orchestra, and comprises light music from Berlin from 1922-1925. (Rare Recorded Editions RRE 180, of 54 Lymington Road, Hampstead, London N.W.6). It costs £3.50, including post. Now this is a record for the dedicated listener to light music, and is made from acoustic and early electric originals that appeared on the Parlophon label in Germany. These heavy records are hard to find nowadays in the United Kingdom in any sort of condition, and one or two of those on the record are feeling twinges of old age, but it is a well-balanced selection of strictly period material compiled by the Vintage Light Music Society. Let us hope that E.M.I. will look into the question of other effusions of light music that is just not heard in these times when restaurant orchestras are just a memory of older generations. The economic side might not look too rosy, but such re-recordings could be made to pay if marketed through the Retrospect Collectors' Society.

T.A. Edison's career and inventions seem to be regarded as noticeably in Japan as in his own country, and this is underlined in a recent report from Toru Funahashi. This year on February 9th, two days before T.A.E.'s birthday, the centenary of the incandescent lamp was celebrated at the Edison monument at the field of the Iwashimizu-Hachiman-Gu Shrine in Kyoto. About 100 notables assembled from universities, the electric industry, science museum, and the gathering was honoured by the presence of the American Consul General. After a wreath-laying ceremony at the monument, the party adjourned to the Kyoto Grand Hotel, where Toru Funahashi delivered a lecture on Edison and demonstrated 32 items relating to Thomas and Charles Edison, and a general discussion followed. Interestingly, bamboo of the type sent to New Jersey for carbonising into lamp filaments still grows round the shrine area.

A monthly magazine for collectors, and called 'Collections' has been received from France. It is to be obtained from 20 rue Alphonse Terray - 38000 Grenoble, and costs 20 francs for the year. About a half of its page area is made up of small Wanted and For Sale ads, and there are features and short articles on various collectible items, and quite a number of illustrations. So far there is little evidence of a strong talking machine lobby, and it could well help someone to start one.

Since the Dinner, W.A. Chislett has asked me for the whereabouts of several possible brass band recordings towards a probable re-issue he is arranging on 1.p. by E.M.I. These are Test Pieces which were issued annually, and he would be pleased to learn of any recordings of the following:-

- 1913: Percy Fletcher's Labour and Love - Winners: Irwell Springs Band
- 1920: Cyril Jenkin's Coriolanus - Winners: St.Hilda Colliery Band
- 1921: Cyril Jenkin's Life Divine - Winners: St.Hilda Colliery Band
- 1922: Hubert Bath's Freedom - Winners: Horwich R.M.I. Band

Any helpful responses will be forwarded to him.

My friend John Trendell, historian of the Royal Marines Bands and author of 'Operation Music-Maker' has kindly passed me this extract from *The Globe and Laurel*, journal of the Royal Marines, August 1893 issue:-



'About ten of the most accomplished performers of the Band of the Chatham Division are now carrying out a novel engagement. They are attending the establishment of Mr Edison in London at stated times and give forth a number of martial airs, the tunes of which are received in phonographs. These instruments thus charged are sent to various parts of the world. The other day two of them were transmitted to the Pope, whilst others have been transmitted to the reigning Princes of India, and to the different crowned heads of Europe, who thus have an opportunity of listening to lively marches etc., originally played by instrumentalists hundreds of miles away.'

The conductor at these sessions was apparently Bandmaster John Wright, who had only recently taken command of the Chatham Band. At present John Trendell says he is working towards a biography of Kenneth Alford (Major F.J. Ricketts R.M.), who wrote some of the finest musically marches and other band pieces before his death in 1945; many of these are familiar to collectors of early records, and they are still played as much as ever today.

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## The Body & Soul of the Gramophone

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### PART 9 - THE NEEDLE IN THE GROOVE

Having said so much about soundboxes whose condition is vital in determining the life of a record and the sound produced from it, I am now going to discuss how the needle behaves in the groove. As the record spins, the sound modulations of the track move the needle from side to side as it follows the contours of the groove. This movement is transmitted to the diaphragm, thus reproducing the sound waves. The efficiency with which the needle point follows the complex bends in the track depends on the condition of the soundbox, and is therefore of equal importance in determining the life of a record and the quality of reproduction.

Under ideal conditions (nothing IS ideal in this life!), you should hear no more from the surface of a record while it is playing than a faint steady background hiss, no matter whether it is soft or loud, or the notes high or low in pitch. On most of the early electrical recordings there may also be a faint crackle, but this is nothing to do with the soundbox. On a cabinet or table grand, surface hiss can largely be subdued by closing the lid, and it is still less apparent on machines with a goodly length of horn inside the cabinet. A fairly stringent test for accurate tracking is to play a loud orchestral record containing plenty of high-pitched instrumentation, keeping the doors closed and leaving the lid up. Thus, with the music toned down so as to interfere as little as possible with the surface noise, it is easier to detect the slightest mistracking. It will show up as a rasping sound superimposed on the background hiss, the rasps coinciding with the louder-pitched passages.

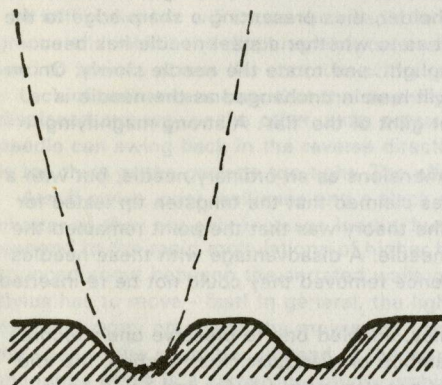
The irregular curves in a record groove can be seen clearly through a magnifying glass and even with the naked eye. As the diameter of each successive turn of the spiral decreases towards the centre, the speed of the track passing under the needle also decreases. The modulations in the track are therefore compressed in proportion. This has a bearing on tracking. In cross-section, the shape of the track is parabolic so that the point of a needle which is also parabolic fits snugly into it. The consistency and hardness of the record surface is calculated best to enable the needle to slide easily along the groove and negotiate the tricky curves. I have noticed that on 78s, while there seems to be a standard pitch (i.e. grooves per inch) and a standard groove-width, on some discs the pitch is noticeably coarser and the grooves thicker and possibly deeper. On other records, particularly those carrying speech, the grooves are much finer and closer together. A wider thread is necessary on records where heavy modulation causes considerable sideways displacement of the track - otherwise the threads could run together in places, breaking down the wall between them.



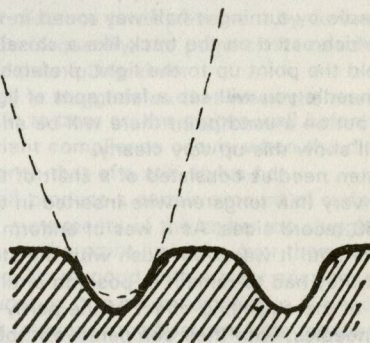
This does sometimes happen, when on a sudden drum beat the needle jumps into the next groove, cutting out or repeating a whole bar of music. On heavy orchestral records the degree of compliance and resilience in a soundbox can be very critical, for in places the wall between two grooves is very thin; once this is breached, a permanent fault is left on the record and the needle may never go past it without jumping forward or getting stuck on one point.

The extremity of the needle point is spherical like the end of a ball-point pen, and its radius is such that it fits the corresponding parabolic shape of the track. Ideally, the radius of the tip should be such that contact is made with both the bottom and the walls of the groove. If the radius is too small, greater pressure is concentrated along the bottom of the groove so that the point tends to miss some of the modulations in the walls and merely scores the channel deeper. Many years ago I was told that a soft needle causes more wear than a loud one. Also, the slimmness of a soft needle affords sufficient flexibility to absorb some of the impact of sharp treble notes. I have found that when using soft tone needles, the balance of the soundbox is more critical if chatter-free tracking is to be achieved.

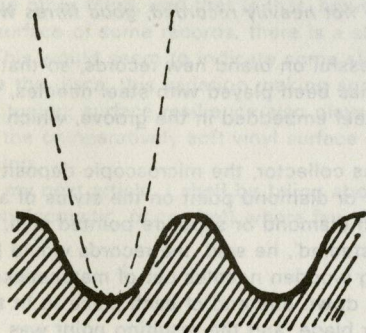
On the sleeve of a '4-in-1' record I have, one is instructed to use only soft or medium tone needles. The inference is that the tip of a loud needle is too large to fit the groove, and would ride along the top, breaking down the walls. (I tried a loud needle on it once, and it did not play very well!) If the needle tip has too great a radius, the point does not reach the bottom of the groove, and all the pressure is borne along its sides. The reproduction may be sharp and clear for a time, but the walls will soon wear away.



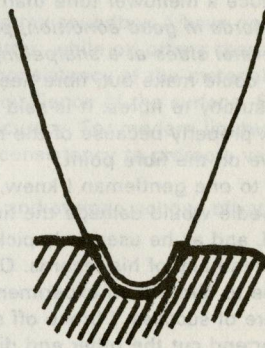
*Soft needle*



*Extra loud needle*



*Loud needle*



*Badly worn needle*



One disadvantage of a steel needle is the speed with which the point wears down, so that it is advisable to use each needle once only in the interests both of reproduction and record wear. However, steel needles could be produced in large numbers at a comparatively low cost. Hence they were more widely used than the so-called semi-permanent types. These cost more and often did not seem to last any longer, even if you could remember how many sides you had played. I personally have found that a steel needle will play two sides of a record perfectly well but if it is not changed after the second side the performance does deteriorate noticeably as the point wears. What happens to the point and the groove if the needle is allowed to run past its useful playing time? Towards the end of the first side its spherical extremity becomes slightly flattened so that a great area is in contact with the trough of the groove, but not enough to affect the playing. Towards the end of the second side so much of its extremity has been worn away that the tapered point of the needle is beginning to become truncated though the area of contact is still small enough to play reasonably well. If you continue to use the same needle on a third side, the point becomes still further truncated till the area of contact increases almost to the width of the groove itself, and the truncated end of the needle has developed a ridge parallel to the direction of the groove, and this ridge is long enough to cut across the contours of the higher frequency modulations. By the end of the third side and certainly on the fourth, so much of the point has been worn away that the truncated end develops a 'shoulder' on each side. The shoulders overlap the walls of the groove so that the needle is now riding on these shoulders on top of the groove walls.

When short of needles, many people would foolishly extract a little more playing time out of a worn needle by turning it half way round in the needle-holder, thus presenting a sharp edge to the record which acted on the track like a chisel. If in doubt as to whether a steel needle has been used, hold the point up to the light, preferably bright sunlight, and rotate the needle slowly. On an unused needle you will see a faint spot of light which will remain unchanged as the needle is rotated, but on a used point there will be an intermittent glint of the 'flat'. A strong magnifying glass will show this up very clearly.

Tungsten needles consisted of a shaft of the same dimensions as an ordinary needle, but with a piece of very thin tungsten wire inserted in the tip. It was claimed that the tungsten tip lasted for up to 150 record sides. As it was of uniform diameter, the theory was that the point remained the same size until it was worn flush with the stock of the needle. A disadvantage with these needles was that they had to remain in position until worn out; once removed they could not be re-inserted because of the chiselling effect of the partly-worn tip.

Fibre needles, with their comparatively soft constituency, enabled one to preserve one's records indefinitely. They were (and are) made from slivers of bamboo of triangular cross-section, the end being cut diagonally to form a point on one angle. Thorn needles were circular and could be re-sharpened on a little machine which rotated the point on an abrasive surface. Fibre and thorn needles produce a mellow tone than metal, but have to be re-sharpened after every side. *(This is not so: on records in good condition, particularly if they are not heavily recorded, good fibres will often play several sides at a sharpening - Ed.)*

As far as I could make out, fibre needles were only successful on brand new records, so that one had to stick strictly to fibres. It is said that when a record has been played with steel needles, fibre will not work properly because of the minute particles of steel embedded in the groove, which act as an abrasive on the fibre point.

According to one gentleman I knew, who was a fastidious collector, the microscopic deposit left by a steel needle would damage the finely ground sapphire or diamond point on the stylus of a pick-up head, and as he used only pick-up heads fitted with diamond or sapphire pointed styli, he would never lend any of his records. Once they had been 'steeled', he said, the records would be of no further use to him. As an experiment I have tried making wooden needles out of matchsticks and had a measure of success. I broke off short sections, pared down one end of each piece to fit the needle holder and cut the other end diagonally with a razor blade, and the resulting point was sharp enough to play one side of a 10 inch record reasonably well.

One final point about needle points:- The longitudinal axis (i.e. running parallel to the groove) of



the area of contact at the needle tip must not be greater than the distance between the shortest recorded modulations in the whole length of the track on the disc. If the needle point is truncated by wear, the truncated point becomes too wide to pass easily round the tighter bends in the track. There is no way of telling exactly when this point of wear is reached - first thing you know is that the record sounds grotty! This truncating effect is taken into account by the fact that the diamond points on many high quality modern styli are elliptical in shape, and when the stylus is in position on the pick-up head, the longitudinal axis (end to end) of the ellipse is at right angles to the track. Not only does this allow the radius of the point to fit that of the groove, but also, the narrow ends of the ellipse are able to follow much smaller track modulations than would a spherical point. On this basis, the point will have a longer life in that it will take longer wear before truncation broadens the ellipse sufficiently to impair the tracking of the stylus. I do not know if this idea was ever applied to needles for acoustic machines, but there seems to be no reason why it could not have been. It would only require the needles to have triangular shafts so that they could be inserted in the correct position on soundboxes with triangular needle sockets.

I come finally to the subject of tracking. How does the needle behave when the tracking is less than accurate? Bad tracking causes more wear and damage to records than anything else short of breaking them.

The three conditions that cause bad tracking are: a stiff stylus-bar; lack of resilience in the diaphragm; and lack of compliance in the diaphragm. I have covered these points and their correction in my previous article on soundboxes.

A stiff stylus-bar will cause the needle to offer more resistance to displacement by curves in the groove and inhibit the diaphragm's power of recovery. Consequently, the point of the needle will tend to bounce across the contours of the groove rather than follow them.

Lack of resilience means that the diaphragm's recovery is sluggish, so that when the needle is displaced one way or the other, extra pressure is brought to bear on the groove-wall before the needle can swing back in the reverse direction. Insufficient compliance occurs when the diaphragm is too thick or the gaskets too tight. The effect is similar to that of a stiff stylus-bar.

A stiff stylus, poor resilience and a slack diaphragm all produce a certain amount of surface chatter as they not only increase inertia, but render the movements of the stylus too sluggish to respond to the rapid modulations of higher frequencies, so the point just jolts over them or gets bounced about between the serrated walls of the groove. To respond with a clear crisp tone, the stylus has to move - fast! In general, the lighter the soundbox, the more compliance is needed in the diaphragm, otherwise the movement from the lower frequency modulations gets transferred to the shell of the soundbox instead of the diaphragm. To get perfect tracking from any given soundbox, there is a certain optimum combination of resilience and compliance necessary for each particular soundbox. This also gives the best tone. As I neither understand the formula nor am any good at sums, I can only find this out by trial and error!

One other thing, and that is that, however well I have tuned my soundbox, I have noticed that on the surface of some records, there is a slight tendency to chatter, while on others there is none at all. This would seem to indicate some slight variation in the consistency of the material used to make the discs; this variation making some difference to the resilience of the surface. So, apart from tuning, surface resilience also plays a part in tracking accuracy. For modern lightweight pick-ups, the comparatively soft vinyl surface of LPs has the right consistency to promote very accurate tracking.

In my next article, I shall be talking about horns, tone tubes and strange echoes of interest and beauty (acoustic, of course!) where few, if any, think to look.

*E.J. Goodall.*





*At the Society's Diamond Jubilee dinner, the Secretary, John McKeown, is seen with Ernest Lough and Mrs Lough. Photo: Len Watts*



*Arthur Ord-Hume giving one of his well-known after dinner speeches at the Jubilee dinner. Dame Eva Turner is on his right. Photo: Len Watts*



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# An Unusual Machine

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DESCRIPTION OF A COMBINED PHONOGRAPH AND DISC GRAMOPHONE  
BY A.D.BESFORD.

I repaired an unusual machine recently, which had provision for playing both cylinder and disc records, and thought members would be interested in having some photographs and a description of it.

In the book 'From Tin Foil to Stereo' by Read and Welch, the 'Deuxphone' is illustrated on page 164, and again on page 74 of Mr Chew's book 'Talking Machines'.

Mr Chew describes the thought behind this type of machine on page 75, and also mentions the 'Twophone' of 1903, but stated that neither seemed to have met with much commercial success. It is possible that the machine I describe could be the latter, as it does not resemble the 'Deuxphone'. A clue to its origin is on the top plate near the regulator, where a letter punch has been used to strike over the original markings, which were 'L' and 'S', (presumably the German *Langsam* and *Schnell*) with the English equivalents 'F' and 'S', since 'S' in German would indicate *Schnell* or Fast, which is the opposite to the inferred English 'S' for Slow.

Looking at photograph 'A', which shows the machine in three-quarter view, on the left is the winding handle, which is slotted diagonally and bored to fit the shaft, the lever behind it is a start/stop, and the knurled screw with combined pointer regulates the speed. The Part over the mandrel, carrying the horn and reproducer is nickel plated zinc alloy and takes a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch horn tube and a 9/16 inch repro. neck. There is a lever just to the left which raises and lowers the repro onto the cylinder, and just below it is a small wheel which allows the whole trunnion to move along the bedplate. The mandrel has a 'gate' at the facing side.

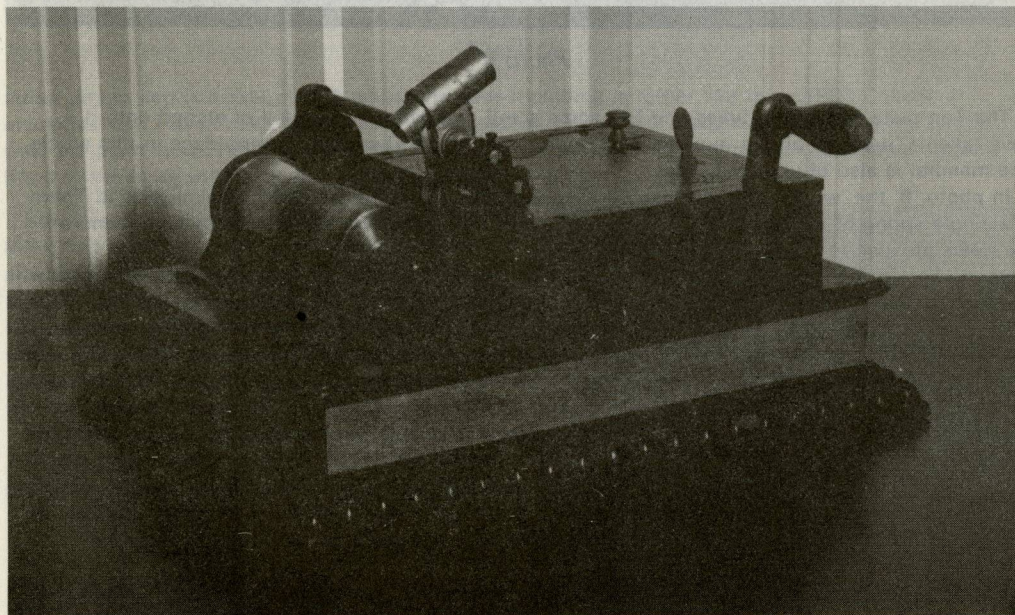
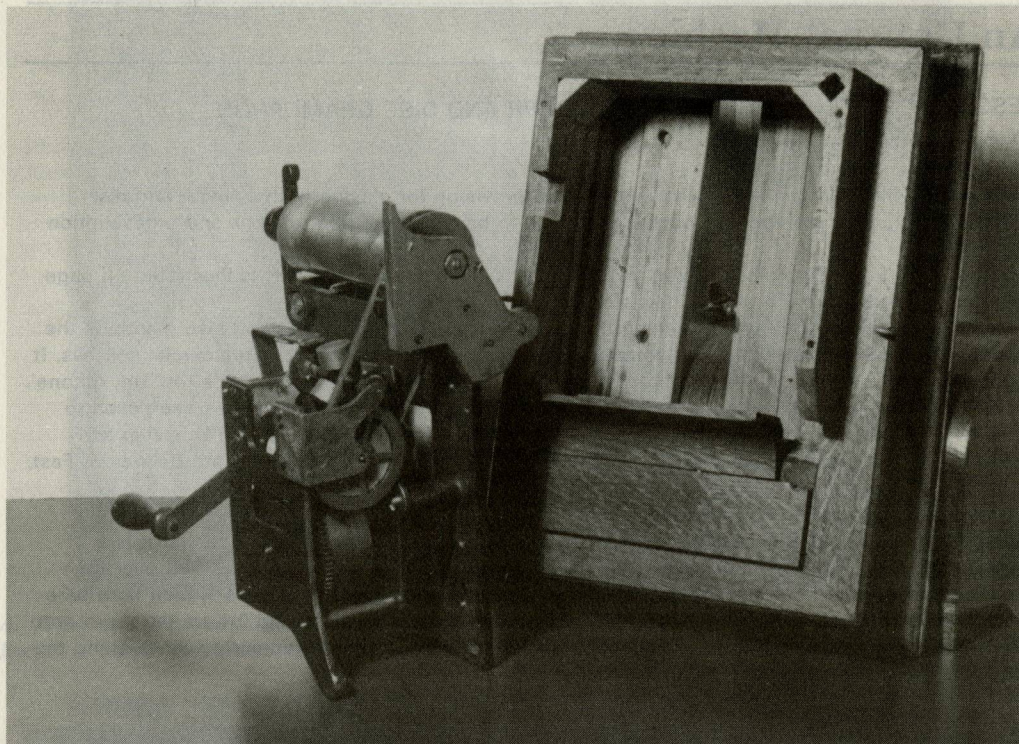


Photo A





*Photo B*

The Top plate is made of brass and has some scroll decorations engraved or etched onto it. I have taken a 'rubbing' of this in pencil and hope it will be good enough to reproduce in this article. The mandrel is also of unplated brass.

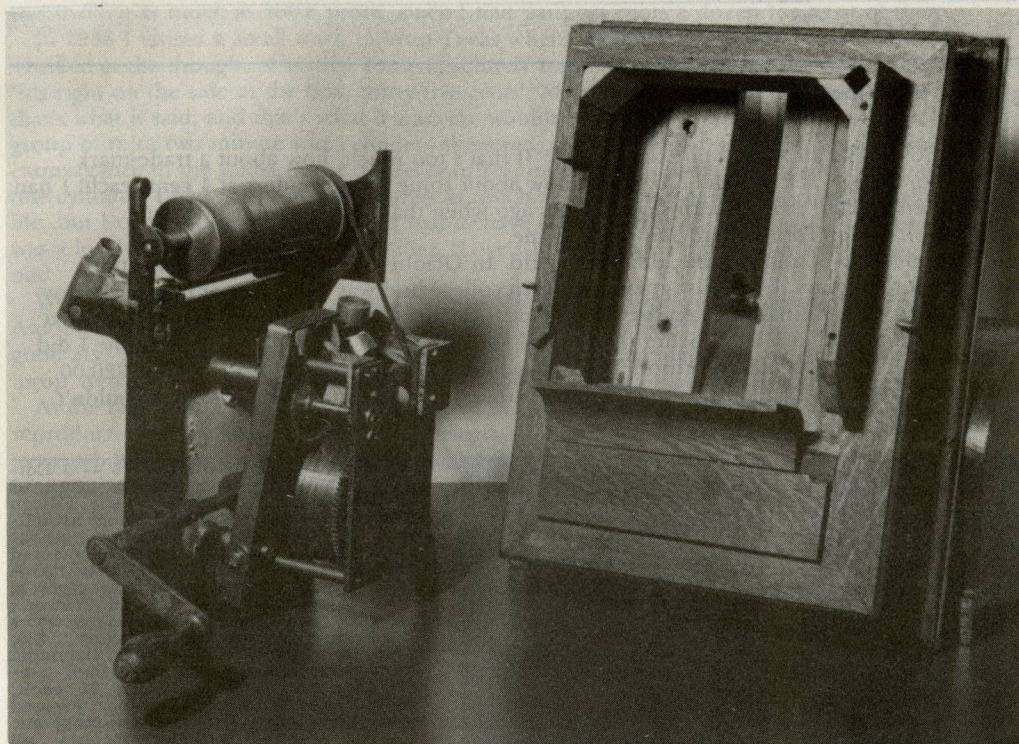
In photo 'B' the 'works' or motor can be seen with the wooden base tilted up alongside it. There is a single spring of approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch width with hole ends encased in a brass barrel, and all the gears are also in brass with steel spindles.

At the bottom right-hand side of the motor plate can be seen a hole. This is about  $\frac{3}{8}$ ths inch in diameter, and when the motor is in position in the case, it lines up with the rectangular hole in the case, seen at upper right, and the small chamfered hole on the extension of the motor plate seen at bottom left. Although the disc-playing parts were missing, it is assumed that this hole is where a vertical rod was placed to take another rod at right-angles in place of a tone-arm, and that a simple arrangement supporting a soundbox was attached so that the phonograph horn could 'double' for playing discs by plugging it onto the soundbox directly, probably through an angle tube to clear the turntable.

In photo 'C' there is another view of the motor showing a bevel gear which has a shaft extending through the top plate just in front of the mandrel. The top of this shaft has a serration probably to grip an extended turntable hub. The turntable would have to have been very high to clear the trunnion of the cylinder-playing part.

The governor weights were missing when I had the machine, and I have fitted some Edison ones, so that part is not original! If the Editor prints photo 'D' this shows the lid of the usual 'bentwood' type held like some Excelsior machines with small cabinet catches and screw eyes. The handle is





*Photo C*

rather ornate and is nickel plated, whilst the base moulding is rather like the c.1902 Columbia machines, and I have been told this was produced by clamping a metal mould carrying the pattern onto the plain moulding of wood whilst the metal was very hot. The rather plain lid moulding, only fitted to the front and back, also echoes 'Excelsior' practice.

Some aspects of the machine would lead one to think that it might be the work of a very skilled amateur using parts and fittings available at the time. For instance, the screws on the motor plate have sharp edges and are cheese-head types which could have been made by an amateur mechanic as they do not have edges relieved as in mass-produced ones.

In conclusion, I should like to thank Mr A.W.Gavin for facilities and Mr P.G.Baker, B.Sc., for producing the photographs.



*Photo D*

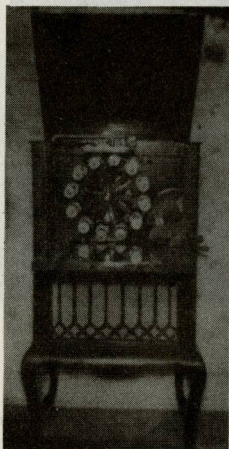


# '... And a Time to Sell'

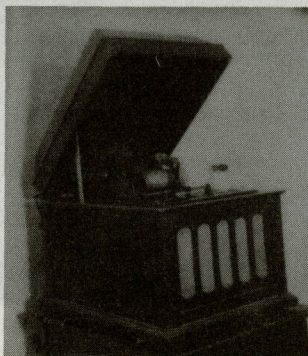
BY RAY PHILLIPS.

Would anyone like an Autophone for \$35.00? If that's too much, how about a trade-mark Berliner for \$5.00? If that's still too much, how about some nice cylinders at 4 cents each! I had long forgotten about this ad until several years ago when that now retired gentleman-phonograph dealer Tom Pollard showed it to me.

It reminded me of a long-gone, different world. In October, 1941 I had already been collecting for six years. I had just graduated from college and was still living at home with my parents. Mother had finally gotten tired of the 'dust-catchers' that lined my room and insisted that I sell some of them. I did better than that. I sold all except one. Of course, that one I did keep is a Sigmund Bergmann (Edison) tinfoil machine. Dad had bought it for me for \$20.00 about 1936 from Mr J.J.Allard, who had demonstrated it in the mid-west in 1878. I couldn't part with it.



*Autophone*



*Mahogany Amberola 50*



*Mahogany Amberola 1A*

**CYLINDER PHONOGRAPHS** — 2 Edison "Home" Phonographs, \$3 each; 2 Edisons about 1905, \$2.50 each; Edison "Triumph" with record shaving attachment, \$5; Edison "Amberola," (about 1910) plays 4 minute records, enclosed horn, stand included, \$4; Edison "Amberola," plays 2 and 4 minute records, with 100 records in 4 built in drawers, \$10; very rare "Autophone," plays twelve 4 minute records automatically, \$35; Columbia Graphophone, \$4; Columbia Grand Graphophone, plays 5 inch records, \$4; six assorted horns, \$1 each; large Victor Talking Machine, pressed wood horn, \$4; Berliner Gramophone, \$5; 700 assorted cylinder records, all good, 25 for a dollar. All above f.o.b. Los Angeles.—Phillips, 843 So. Citrus, Los Angeles. o1005

Two months after the ad appeared events at Pearl Harbor changed the entire world. Prices of phonographs started a climb that hasn't stopped yet. Lest you think that I was giving things away at the prices in the ad, let me mention some of the costs. The Homes, Triumph and Columbias had cost a dollar or so for the machines, perhaps another 25 or 50 cents each for the horns. Horns and horn cranes were almost never found with machines in those days. They were too worthless to save, and were simply discarded. The 'Amberola ... stand included' was a beautiful Amberola 50, and had cost \$4.00. The 'Amberola plays 2 and 4 minute records, etc.' was a beautiful Amberola 1A with 100 perfect cylinders, mostly 2 minute wax, each in its original box with proper top and hardly played. It too cost \$4.00. At 4 cents each for cylinders I



was making as much as 400% profit, since I had paid ten cents a dozen for most of them.

In 1936 I visited a small town in West Texas where an Edison dealer still had original stock. Thrilled at the thought of getting some absolutely mint cylinders I asked the price. The answer - 'It's right on the side of the box; thirty-five cents'. My mind reeled with the shock. Sure enough, that's what it said, and that's what it was. He wouldn't budge. My hopes of acquiring a large group of mint two minute wax cylinders shattered, and overwhelmed with guilt over such extravagance in the midst of the depression, I numbly handed over thirty-five cents and bought one cylinder. I had paid thirty-five times as much as I had ever paid for a cylinder before in my life, but I couldn't help myself, I just had to have one. Needless to say I will never forget it. It was a lovely duet by Anthony and Miller, 'Love's Roundelay'. I lost money on it when I sold out!

Well, back to the ad. In the several months after the ad appeared I sold everything in it. The Autophone and the Amberola 1A moved rather slowly. Let's face it. I knew I had something good and was holding out for top dollar! Finally my brother suggested we call a movie studio 'prop' department. I called MGM and for \$50.00 they sent a truck for both machines.

At the big MGM auction about five years ago I bought a very interesting item. It was a reproduction of an Edison 'Embossing Telegraph Repeater'. It was, according to at least one story, while Edison was experimenting with an Embossing Telegraph Repeater that he got the idea of the phonograph. The item that I got was made by the MGM prop department for the movie 'Edison the Man' with Spencer Tracy playing the part of Edison. But there were no phonographs in the sale; not a single one.

P.S. In the interval between finishing the above and sending it to the Editor I most unexpectedly found, and bought, another Autophone. To my recollection it is the first one I have seen since 1941. Autophones automatically play, and change, 12 Blue Amberol cylinders. My second one cost 84 times as much as my first one!

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## Reminiscences of Recording Artists

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NUMBER ONE JOHN H. BIEHLING RESEARCHED BY FRANK ANDREWS (MAY 1979)

John H. Biehling, singer, was one of the early recording artists appearing on cylinders and disc records in the United States of America, some of which were also sold in the U.K., and also on disc records recorded in Britain with the Haydn Quartet. John Biehling, in 1914, recalled that his first recording engagement, with others, was for the New Jersey Phonograph Company in 1892 for which company Victor Emerson was the 'recording expert'.

The studio was in a loft, over a meat-packing house, littered with boxes and barrels in every state of handling and shipping and piled everywhere.

There were about nine horns all grouped together each one leading to a separate machine, connected by a rubber hose. The operator put the soft wax cylinders on the machines and let the recorder down and then said, 'Alright, go ahead'.

I am sure I almost forgot to sing when I heard that sizzling noise coming out of the horns. However we got through that round fairly well, considering our nervous state, and after that we began to make some records and they sounded pretty good.



Well, that was the first time I got real money for singing and I felt like a millionaire going home that night. We worked contentedly along those lines for about a year, at the same time holding down my job at my trade during the day - all was serene, when - crash - someone constructed a dubbing machine, which meant they could make any amount of records from a master record and we could see fewer engagements coming our way with this new scheme. It certainly gave us a shock when we discovered that this new idea meant that one 'master record' could be made to make duplicates until the wax wore out.

They built the machine with two mandrels, one under the other; on one they would put the cylinder with the song on, and on the other a blank cylinder, then start the machine and threw the sound from one to the other without the services of the quartet. It was tragic, but like all labor-saving devices, it gave birth to a greater field of work to develop records in. Where we formerly sang the same song forty times, now we sang forty different selections, satisfying the rapidly growing market for canned music.

By this time our success as a quartet was quite famous and we worked for all the record-making companies then doing business. About this time, say 1895, we used to go to Philadelphia and sing about once a month for a man named Berliner, a quiet, modest little German, who had us work in his little attic workshop and register our selection on a flat matrix. The machine and disc were his own ideas and manufacture and independent then of any other model then in use, so small and insignificant was the beginning of the greatest of all mechanisms in sound reproduction. About 1896 I decided that I would let stained-glass work get along without me. I took a chance on an artistic career. We sang for years into the same old wax cylinders, however Gaskin signed an exclusive contract with the Columbia, consequently breaking up the Manhasset Quartette (Gaskin, Joe Riley, Walter Snow and Biehling).

Next you find me in a quartet, the members of which were Harry McDonough, S.H.Dudley, W.F.Hooley.

In 1898 Gavin C.Child, whom I met through singing for Mr Berliner, got us interested in a new company being formed called the Victor Talking Machine Company. Eldridge R.Johnson was its founder ..... I can say he is the one man responsible for the present marvellous development of the Victor Talking Machine today.

Mr Child suggested that the quartet contracted to sing exclusively for the Victor Talking Machine Company ... This is where the Haydn Quartet swung into line and, along with Caruso and other stars, behold us for many years, about fifteen to be exact, singing harmoniously together, in every sense of the word, for the exclusive use of the Victor T.M.Co.

We went to London in 1902 and showed the British how to make real records. For two months we had a large time as American representative singers.

*John Biehling was on the sales staff of the New York Talking Machine Company, prominent Victor dealers, when he gave this account of his early days in recording. His memory was at fault when he ascribed the formation of the Victor company as being around 1898 for the company was not formed until 1901, although the Consolidated Talking Machine Company, its predecessor, was formed in the previous year.*



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# 'Music Hall Records' First Year

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BY FRANK ANDREWS.

About a year ago I reviewed the initial issues of Tony Barker's new periodical 'Music Hall Records', (the 'Records' refers to both the written word and sound recordings), and I suggested then that this magazine, produced and based upon the thorough researches which Tony himself has undertaken and continues to undertake, can only but progress into a definitive library of information with respect to both Music Hall performers and any recordings they may have left to posterity.

'Music Hall Records', with issue number 7, has now entered upon its second year.

What has Tony Barker given us in his first six issues?

The first thing of note is the Alfred Bryan caricatures of celebrated Music Hall artists which have graced each cover of numbers 1 to 6. In order these have been of 'Little Tich', G.H.Chirgwin, George Lashwood, Kate Carney, Gus Elen, and Tom Leamore. The most recent issue, at the time of writing, shows Tom Costello. These caricatures, which date originally from the 1880's and 1890's, provide one with a feeling of conformity and continuity of the magazine's terms of reference which I, for one, hope will continue to appear on many more future issues.

The magazine's main articles are the 'pen portraits' and histories of the stars and other performers who were on the halls, accompanied by relevant lists of recordings and lists of songs which the artists featured, but which in a great number of instances were never recorded. Artists dealt with so far have been - 'Little Tich', 'Rich & Rich', G.H.Chirgwin - The White-Eyed Kaffir, May Moore-Duprez, George Lashwood, 'Jack & Evelyn', Kate Carney, Will Terry, 'Duncan & Godfrey', Gus Elen, Dan Crawley, Tom Leamore and Austin Rudd.

Another series of items are the writings by, or of incidental interest about, such performers as George Robey, Vesta Tilley, Marie Lloyd, Harry Randall, T.E.Dunville, G.H.Chirgwin, Charlie Rich and Wilkie Bard.

Similarly, some Music Halls and their 'Bills' have also been the objects of a number of articles in which further artists are mentioned. Halls which have received mention, with dates given, have been 'The Tivoli', (1903); The Metropolitan, (1898); The Oxford, (1893) and The London, (1905).

Other aspects of 'Music Hall' which have been covered include the earliest known recordings, contemporary activities, photographs of past performers, photographs of song sheet covers and the background relating to a number of well-known songs.

Various long-playing record transfers and tape cassettes of Music Hall interest have also been advertised.

The yearly subscription fee for the U.K. is £3.60p for six issues from Mr A.Barker, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] London, SW6. Telephone [REDACTED]

Overseas rates, air and surface, particulars from above.



# The Edison Bell Story

SOCIETY BOOKLET £1.00

This is a brief history of the Edison Bell Company from its inception until 1924. In addition to the story are many pictures of the factory and surrounding areas, details of the items in the accessories catalogues, and illustrations of the later Discaphones. This book gives detail of much of the legal wrangles that prevailed in the early days, to the forming of Edisonia Ltd and the move to Velvet Face Records, then The Winner label. The war effort is mentioned and the development of the wireless industry in the company. The book is supplemented with an appendix written by John Carreck on his findings on the history of Edison Bell.

This is a book you should have in your library if you are interested in the English contribution to the Phonograph development.

When you order ask for B 104 and send £1.00 less discount as directed in sales catalogue 14.

Dave Roberts

PENRYN  
CORNWALL

*The Editor:*

*Dear Sir,*

*I am not a collector of old records in general, or of any particular vintage, but I have tried (with very little success) to obtain records and information in respect of a few artists. No reference has previously appeared in the Hillandale News concerning Hatherley Clarke, and all that I know about him is that his records appear under the name of Herbert Ainsworth on the Ariel label; these were the original Zonophone pressings. Can any member enlighten me further in respect of this singer and his recorded repertoire?*

*Does anyone have in their collection G7372 Regal by Charles Hawkins? I know that this is an electric remake of an acoustic disc but was it the only release by Hawkins?*

*Finally, does any member have a copy of 'Inflamatus et ascensus/Ave Maria' by Ben Millett? I have sought this record for years. Surely I am not alone in my appreciation of these obscure artists; I shall welcome any information about them.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

*P.R.Johns.*



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# "In The Groove But Out Of The Rut"

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No. 1 BY FRANK ANDREWS

*(A series of articles about unique recordings of the past which were outside the usual monthly supplemental fare of the record-issuing companies.)*

**No. 1. "The Coronation of Napoleon I." May 18, 1804.  
Odeon Record 97338/97342 Speed 74 r.p.m.**

This recording comes under the classification of "Descriptive" and is but one of many hundreds of such recordings which the recording companies of the acoustical era engineered in their studies to portray events which they were unable to record in actuality (as could be accomplished with the later electrical recording methods), or to record events which had happened in the past.

This Odeon "Coronation" record was reviewed in March 1910 as a "Grand Historic Scene" and was described as a reconstruction of an historic event, by L. Julien Rousseau, from the literary and musical documents of the period (*circa* 1804) when Napoleon Bonaparte became the Emperor of France.

Mons. L. J. Rousseau devoted himself to patient and lengthy research in the French Government's archives and other areas, and studied an array of literary and musical documents bearing on the subject, the results of which enabled him to ascertain the exact details of what took place on the historic occasion when Napoleon was crowned Emperor. It was claimed that the event was thus reproduced on the two sides of this Odeon Record with such accuracy that it "gives the listener good cause for imagining . . . that he is, himself, taking part in the historical occurrence."

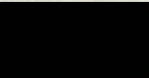
One hundred and fifty persons were involved in the production of these two 10¾" sides, which fact was reckoned to be unique in the history of the talking machine up to that time. The principal speaking roles on the recording were spoken by Mlle. Marriette Lelieres and MM. Brunot and Desonnes of the Comedie-Francaise, while the musical content was supplied by the Chorus of the Paris Opera, La Musique de La Garde Republicaine, and the Grand Symphonic Orchestra of Paris. A large number of supernumeraries was also engaged. Side 97338 allegedly opens with the noise of the crowds outside the Imperial Palace at the Tuileries, awaiting the departure of the processions which should begin at 9 a.m. Military commands are heard and the sound of drum rolls and trumpets. The excitement of the crowds is overwhelming and the Guard is hard-pressed to keep them in order. Incidents occur and women are heard screaming with pain. Eventually the bells ring out, and the Pope (who has come from Rome to perform the Consecration Ceremony) passes. One of his attendants, Spéroni, riding on a mule and carrying a large crucifix, becomes the subject of quips from the watching crowds. The crowd then cries, "Au Notre Dame, Au Notre Dame", and rush towards the famous cathedral.

Side 97432 begins with the noises of the crowds who have been waiting outside the cathedral. Officials who have been waiting are half-frozen with the cold, which was intense, and they give expression to their discomfort. Suddenly there is a discharge from the guns of the artillery and the procession appears, to make a triumphal entry into the cathedral amidst the acclamation of the crowds. The cardinals come forward and the ceremony of crowning begins. The chorus, accompanied by the Grand Symphony Orchestra, now sings the hymns which had been composed especially for the occasion, but which have since disappeared from the Liturgy.



The Pope pronounces the solemn words consecrating Napoleon Bonaparte as the first Emperor of the French people. Napoleon's answering words are heard and the record finishes with a burst of melody as the "Vivat in Aeternum" is given out by the full chorus and the orchestra and Band, with the firing of guns and the shouts of the people added.

The record was on sale from Barnett Samuel & Sons.

  
Sussex.  
6th March 1979

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

*I have just read the article by George Frow in the February Hillandale News and wonder whether the attached ramblings may be of some interest to Members?*

*Yours sincerely,*

Alan E. Sheppard

#### **The National Symphony Orchestra and Others**

The reference by George Frow in the February journal to The National Symphony Orchestra brings to my mind a 10" Regal Zonophone record, which I bought for 1/3 during the 1930s, of The Barber of Seville Overture. Even at that time the recording must have been almost a decade old and, for no clear reason, certainly not because of side length, two small cuts had been made in the music. The performance however, it seemed to my youthful and impecunious ears, sparkled as no other and I often wondered (and still do wonder) who was the un-named conductor of this National Symphony Orchestra.

The real National Symphony Orchestra was of course the 1940s creation of Sidney Beer and he and many illustrious conductors gave morale boosting Albert Hall concerts with the Orchestra. Recordings of the Orchestra made by Decca were often very fine and surely formed the nucleus of their Classical Catalogue rebuilding. I wonder if Decca might, one day, consider the issue on L.P. of a selection of shorter items conducted by some of the notabilities who were if only fleetingly associated with the Orchestra — they make a very impressive list.

Our present National Philharmonic Orchestra has adopted the name used in 1943 by an orchestra whose conductor was Jan Hurst. I attended a concert which it gave at the Pyramid Theatre in Sale, near Manchester (and I notice among the personnel several names which later appeared in Hallé programmes). Messrs. Rawicz and Landauer, who were ubiquitous in the Manchester area at that time, appeared with the Orchestra in a work by Maryan Rawicz for solo piano and orchestra entitled "Southern Nights". In this performance Rawicz played the solo part and Walter Landauer conducted the orchestra; surely one of the very rare occasions before Landauer died on which either pianist played solo in public after formation of the partnership.

This National Philharmonic Orchestra was far from being a crack ensemble however and vanished from the concert scene leaving just a few memories of at least one unique evening but nothing in the way of a recorded legacy.



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## My Introduction to the 'CLOCKWORK ACOUSTIC'

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I was nearly eight years old when I first became aware of the existence of Gramophones. The Great War had ended, my class was in its third and final year in the infant section of our little country school. We were awaiting our transfer to the senior school which was separated from us by a wooden and glass partition. Our slates and stone pencils had been discarded for exercise books, jotters and lead pencils.

Sitting next to me at one of the long desks of the period was a new boy, whose family had not long moved into the district. He went by the nickname of 'Pence'; this was because he lived in a house called Pennsylvania, so named by a previous owner who had made 'his pile' in the States, and had returned to his native land to spend his declining years.

This lad and I became bosom pals; he was destined to roam the world with the R.N. I was to remain within a fifty-mile radius of my birthplace. He often regaled me with accounts of a wonderful machine his grandmother owned, that could talk, sing and play lovely music. I gathered that he was allowed to operate it occasionally; how I envied him, how I wished we had one at my home, that wish was to be granted a few years later.

One morning when Miss P... our young teacher had given us a silent reading task whilst she went on with the marking and correcting of our previous night's home-work, Pence turned to me, whispering in my ear, "Have you heard this one?" Then out came a four-line doggerel which was, by the standards of those pre-permissive days, nothing less than — bawdy. "Say it again", I begged, hoping to memorize it. "Pass me your jotter", he replied, "I'll write it down for you".

Miss P... looking up suddenly, saw he was writing when he should have been reading, came across and picked up the jotter. There was a tense moment while she studied it, then an explosion. "WHERE did you get hold of this filth?" No reply. "I want to know", she demanded, "who taught you this verse?" Poor Pence began to tremble, anticipating the punishment in store for him, the usual practice for serious offenders was to be sent through the communicating door into the senior school where the Head-master wielded the cane.

"N.. no one taught me it M.. Miss", he stammered, "I heard it on my g.. grandmother's g.. gramaffon". "You naughty boy", scolded Miss P.. "telling such lies, you certainly did not hear THAT on your grandmother's gramophone, nor on any other gramophone for that matter. I've a good mind to..." she pondered a moment. The whole class waited for the verdict, it never came, instead she told him severely — to get on with his reading. Then tearing out the offending page, she dropped it in the grate on her way back to her desk.

I kept my eye on her for a while, and noticed her shoulders quivering spasmodically, whilst her head was bent very low over her work, no doubt to hide her smiles.

A grand sport was Miss P..

M. John.



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